19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

243 The grain is carried in baskets on the backs of the beaters (see p. 94) and is poured slowly into the bin so as not to settle compactly. Should a basket slip and fall into the bin or its contents be dashed in, a fowl must be killed and an offering made. The storing of grain must be finished as speedily as possible; but if it can not be done in one day, the workers may rest over night.

251 343 The task of storing finished, they bring an offering for "Hpi Bi Yaw," [3] consisting of a clod of earth, a morsel of rice, and a small cup of liquor. These are placed on the paddy in the bin, and a prayer of thanksgiving is said to her. After these ceremonies the cultivator feels at liberty to take grain from his store and carry it home for food.

A small supply of paddy is always put aside in a special basket for seed, each family preserving its own, which is supposed to date back to a time when its forbears had an unusually good crop in some favorable year. Only in the last extremity will a Karen eat his seed-grain. There are many varieties of rice having their special names, each cherished by particular localities and families. Hill rice is greatly prized as being more delicious than plains rice.

244 248 The Karen raise different kinds of vegetables in their rice-fields, such as certain varieties of gourds, beans, yams, a kind of sweet potato, and peppers of various sorts, especially the red chili so generally used for condiment. Cotton is also grown in the fields along with the rice, standing until long after the paddy has been reaped. The cotton is usually considered to be the women's crop. They tend it, gather the bolls, and carry them home. The other products of the field seem to belong to all members of a family alike. The tips of various plants are used for greens. These must be plucked with the fingers and not cut off with a sharp instrument, inasmuch as the spirits dislike their being dissevered with a knife. A few plants of cockscomb are grown in the field, the red variety ("hpaw ghaw") being preferred to the yellow, because they are supposed to dazzle the eyes of the demons and prevent their harming the crop. In the lower hills sesame is often raised for its seeds, which are threshed out and sold to the Burmese, who press the oil out of them. This is serviceable in cooking and lighting. It is said to be not unlike linseed oil in certain respects, but supplies a large amount of the fats required in curries.

[462]

245 In the Toungoo and Shwegyin Hills great quantities of betel-nuts are grown. These regions furnish, I believe, the greater part

[3] The divinity who presides over the cultivation of the paddy: see page 124.

19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

of the supply of these nuts for all Burma. The trees bearing them are tall slender palms *(Areca Catechu)*, which flourish in moist mountain valleys where they are shaded by larger trees. The nuts grow in clusters just below the crown of leaves. A tree may produce as many as four hundred nuts a year, which are sold in baskets at three or four rupees a basket. There are several gardens that number these palms by the thousands and many others by the hundreds.

Plantain gardens are cultivated on the bottom-lands near the rivers, where there are rich alluvial deposits. Plantains or bananas, of which many varieties exist, are comprised in the genus *Musa*. The stem grows from four to fifteen feet in height and produces sprouts, which are set out at the end of the rainy season and begin to bear by the next year. The new plants send out sprouts in their turn, these growing from the sides of the herb and continuing its life indefinitely. Some varieties of the plantain in the hill-country bear very delicious fruit, which I have almost never seen on the plains. As far as I know it is raised for home consumption, although it may be sold in a few cases to Burman and Shan traders for a small price.

In the Toungoo and Moulmein districts oranges are extensively grown. The groves are along the well-watered valleys, and the fruit is ripe in late September and in October. Nothing has been done, so far as I am aware, to improve the varieties, but a ready market is open to the fruit produced. The Karens bring the supply down to Toungoo in dugouts, and sell it to traders on the river bank at prices varying from one to three or four rupees per hundred, according to the size and quality of the fruit.

A few years ago coffee was widely planted in the Toungoo district; but a blight ruined the greater part of the groves, and the industry ceased to develop. A little is still raised here and there, but it is of an inferior grade.

Tobacco is grown along the sandy banks of the rivers, not in large quantities but sufficient for home consumption and petty trading. It is cured in the most primitive way and consumed in many forms.

I have been informed that in the early days the Karen trained the vines of the betel leaf creeper *(Piper Betel)* to run up a certain kind of rough-barked tree, which a few vines would completely cover with their glossy green foliage, supplying a large crop of leaves and thereby a considerable income for the possessor of such

19: Marshall M-5 (ca. 1910) 1922 AP1 Burma
Karen AP7

245 a vine-clad tree, which was called "pu la." Wanderers of other nationalities, happening to discover such trees, dispoiled them of their treasure by cutting the vines. Thus, but very few "pu la" remain.

Dr. Mason tells us that "Karen boys and maidens engaged in harvesting these leaves with great zest and it was not uncommon for young men, in seeking companions to inquire who were the most agile climbers of 'pu la' or betel leaf trees." [4]

231 The Karen in Toungoo have always raised more or less silk and woven the material for their best garments from it. The silk-worms are of a native variety and spin a thread far inferior to that of improved species. Not many years ago the attempt was made to introduce a worm of larger size, but it met with ill success, because the creature made a peculiar creaking sound in chewing the leaves of the mulberry tree. The superstitious people thought the new worms were possessed of some strange demon and killed them, in order to ward off an unknown danger.

314 Many of the inhabitants of Karenni gather stick-lac, which is
386 the deposit of an insect on certain trees found in the jungle. They also increase the supply by attaching the insects to other trees. The deposit is used extensively in making red dyes [5] and is marketed in Toungoo on the twigs to which it is attached.

231 The Karen is skilled in all jungle-craft. He knows the woods
137 and what may be found there. He has learned, among other things, that bees establish their hives high up in the branches of the oil-tree *(Dipterocarpus lociis)*. When he finds a new hive he marks the tree by putting a tuft of grass at its foot. Others will recognize the mark and respect his claim. To climb the fifty or seventy-five feet to the lower branches of these giant trees is no easy task. However, it is accomplished by means of pegs driven into the trunk and a rope encircling it. Often a honey-gatherer makes his ascent at night, lest he grow dizzy in looking down from such a height. Once at the hive, he smokes the bees out with a smudge and collects the honey into joints of large bamboo. The Karen villagers in the vicinity of Thandaung used to be called "Wild Bees" by the Burmans of Toungoo, on account of the supplies of honey which they brought in from their hills.

482 Besides the pursuits already mentioned, the Karen of the hills
492 sometimes engage in other occupations, such as transporting pro-

[4] *British Burma. Its People and Productions*, p. 495.
[5] See page 110.